

Country Name	The HIV/AIDS Regional Coordination Center (RCC) Project
Thailand	

I. Project Outline

Project Cost	231 million yen	
Project Period	April, 2005 – March, 2008	
Implementing Agency	ASEAN Institute for Health Development (AIHD), Mahidol University	
Cooperation Agency in Japan	Japanese Foundation for AIDS Prevention	
Related Projects (if any)	Japan's cooperation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy/Strategy and Operation on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control for Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (Third Country Training, 2012-2014) 	
Background	<p>In Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV countries), the neighboring countries of Thailand, the efforts to tackle the problems related to HIV/AIDS were constrained by the insufficient institutional and human capacity. Also, large population migrated across borders, and the migrating population was projected to increase in the future. Therefore, it was urgently important to take regional-level actions to prevent infection spread.</p> <p>Based on the regional cooperation mechanism agreed upon at the JICA-ASEAN Regional Cooperation Meeting (JARCOM), several of Thailand's neighbors requested Thailand to provide technical assistance in the fields of HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>AIHD, established with assistance from Japan in 1982 as part of ASEAN Human Resources Project, developed training courses in primary health care, health management, etc., for participants from Thailand and other ASEAN countries including the CLMV countries, and got reputation. Also, AIHD positively implemented researches and training in HIV/AIDS control, and was expected to make use of its training experience and networks to contribute to human resource development in HIV/AIDS control by establishing the HIV/AIDS Regional Cooperation Center (RCC) with assistance from this project.</p>	
Inputs	Japanese Side	Thailand Side
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experts: 3 persons for Long term 2. Equipment: 9 million yen 3. Local cost: expenses for project employees, trainers' training and other activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff allocated: 7 persons 2. Local cost: administrative and operational expenses (AIHD/TICA), expenses for multi-national trainers' training (cost shared by TICA and JICA) 3. Project office and training facilities (AIHD)
Project Objectives	Overall goal	
	Human capacity for HIV/AIDS programs in Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam is developed based upon each country's specific needs and situation with the proper utilization of resources from the HIV/AIDS Regional Cooperation Center (RCC) and the result is applied for HIV/AIDS programs.	
	<p>Project Objective(s)</p> <p>The RCC functions and is recognized by concerned organizations as a coordination center to provide training, information, and the human resources needed to support human capacity building for HIV/AIDS programs in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam.</p> <p>Output(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization and management systems of RCC are established and strengthened. • Management system, curricula, and materials used in training programs are developed and improved in response to the specific country needs of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. • Information concerning human resources, research, and relevant experiences on HIV/AIDS in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand is collected, properly maintained, and disseminated to counterpart organizations, donor agencies, ASEAN Institute for Health Development (AIHD) alumni, and other stakeholders. • Human resources, information, and financial resources in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand for HIV/AIDS programs are mobilized for more effective utilization through networking. 	

II. Result of the Evaluation

Summary of the Evaluation

The CLMV countries encountered the HIV/AIDS epidemic at a later stage than Thailand. The governments of these countries identified the epidemic as a major threat to their socio-economic development and strengthened the countermeasures. In addition, with the increasing number of people migrating across the borders of the CLMV countries and Thailand, possible expansion of HIV transmission across the borders was considered to continue to be a major communicable disease control problem. However, efforts to tackle such problems were constrained by the insufficient institutional and human capacity to effectively implement HIV/AIDS programs.

This project mostly achieved the project purpose of establishing the RCC as a regional coordination center to provide trainings and information on HIV/AIDS in terms of the RCC's networking among Thailand and the CLMV countries in

HIV/AIDS-related capacity development, and the overall goal to a certain extent in terms of some ex-trainees' application of what they had learned at RCC to their HIV/AIDS-related activities in the respective countries. As for sustainability, the financial aspect of the implementing agency has faced some difficulties to continue the same scale of activities as those during the project period due to the dependence on project-based budget from outside resources.

For relevance, the project has been highly relevant with development policies and development needs of the CLMV countries and Thailand, as well as Japan's ODA policy. For efficiency, both the project cost and the project period were as planned.

In the light of the above, this project is evaluated to be satisfactory.

1 Relevance

This project has been highly relevant with Thailand's and the CLMV countries' development policies to respond to HIV/AIDS issues as set in the respective national strategic plans on HIV/AIDS, development needs to control and prevent HIV/AIDS in the respective countries and across the border, as well as Thailand's development cooperation policy to neighboring countries "Thailand Development Cooperation Strategy 2007-2011" and Japan's ODA policy "Joint Cooperation to Third Countries", which is one of the priority areas in ODA operation for Thailand, at the time of both ex-ante evaluation and project completion. Therefore, relevance of this project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

This project has mostly achieved the project purpose at the time of the project completion, and somewhat achieved the overall goal at the time of the ex-post evaluation. For the project purpose (establishing the RCC as the HIV/AIDS regional coordination center), the project established the RCC under AIHD, and the RCC obtained the contact channels with 66 concerned organizations by the time of project completion through the development of a database of HIV/AIDS experts/practitioners, trainers' trainings and dissemination of related information by means of newsletters and websites, all targeted to the CLMV countries and Thailand. A survey conducted at the end of the project period showed that those organizations' recognition of the RCC as an effective coordination center for HIV/AIDS almost reached the expected level. At the time of the ex-post evaluation, AIHD¹ continues its contact with approximately 64 concerned organizations for updating information, inviting lecturers and for providing research services. Also, AIHD continues training courses/seminars titled HIV/AIDS, including the JICA-assisted Third Country Training Program that is currently under preparation, and those containing HIV/AIDS-related topics for students, researchers and practitioners in Thailand and other countries including the CLMV countries. However, no data was available on the level of concerned organizations' current recognition of the RCC/AIHD.

Although there was little tracking data to verify the achievement of the overall goal (human capacity development on HIV/AIDS in the respective countries with use of the RCC resources), the result of a survey in 2010 and some opinions collected for this ex-post evaluation² (both for the ex-trainees) showed at least some achievement of the overall goal in that there were cases where ex-trainees provided training on HIV/AIDS to health workers and/or provided inputs to development of national health strategic plans based on what they had learned at RCC. The indirect impact within Thailand includes AIHD's contribution to national policy planning in HIV/AIDS such as the conduct of "Evaluation of the National AIDS Response in Thailand" in November 2011, which will provide inputs to subsequent five-year AIDS plan (2012-2016).

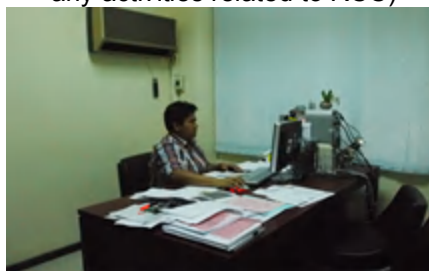
Therefore, effectiveness/impact of this project is fair.

Number of participants in
RCC trainers' training (project activities)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Cambodia	0	39	15	19	73
Lao PDR	24	23	25	0	72
Myanmar	24	16	15	0	55
Vietnam	0	38	22	0	60
Total	48	116	77	19	260

Source: RCC

(A project staff for
any activities related to RCC)



(AIHD)



3 Efficiency

The inputs were appropriate for producing the outputs of the project, and both the project cost and the project period were as planned. Therefore, efficiency of this project is high.

4 Sustainability

Regarding the organizational status of the RCC after the project completion, it was planned that the RCC would either (i) continue to be a distinct organization of AIHD (in the same way as during the project implementation period) or (ii) be merged to other activities of AIHD, and AIHD chose the latter option when its organization was restructured in 2009. Therefore, the HIV/AIDS-related networking and training are currently carried out directly by AIHD as the fulfillment of the function of the RCC.

The project has some problems in financial aspects of the implementing agency. While staying in surplus and being able to allocate certain portion of budget³ to training and research including HIV/AIDS related training courses or modules,

¹ In 2009, AIHD restructured its organization, and the functions of the RCC were succeeded to several divisions.

² A constraint for this ex-post evaluation was unavailability of data to verify the achievement of the overall goal. Due to the time constraints, it was impossible for the overseas office (evaluator) to conduct a track survey to ex-trainees in the CLMV countries. Instead, the overseas office contacted a few ex-trainees by email and collected their opinions.

³ The budget sources of AIHD are the subsidies from the government to Mahidol University (50%) and own earning income of AIHD (50%).

AIHD has faced difficulties to continue the same scale of the RCC activities (e.g., training, dissemination of information, monitoring including the follow-up visits to ex-trainees) as those during the project period because many project activities had been funded from outside resources (project-based budget from TICA and JICA) at that time.

However, no problem has been observed in policy, institutional and technical aspects of the implementing agency. In the policy background, this project is consistent with the national plans/strategies on HIV/AIDS in Thailand and the CLMV countries in an ongoing manner. In the institutional aspect, while the structure of AIHD has been partially changed from the implementation period due to the restructuring in 2009 and the functions of RCC were succeeded to several divisions, such changes have not seriously affected the continuity of project effectiveness as some activities have been continuing (see “2. Effectiveness/ Impact”). Director of AIHD also confirmed that AIHD would maintain the functions of RCC that had been established by this project. In the technical aspect, AIHD has no problem because the key staff who had been involved in the project remains in important positions of AIHD, and training in HIV/AIDS for neighboring countries has been continued.

Therefore, sustainability of this project is fair.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing agency

- 1) AIHD is recommended to strengthen monitoring / follow-up of ex-trainees (i.e., track their activities to disseminate what they learned from RCC and survey the recognition of RCC) to measure effectiveness of AIHD trainings
- 2) AIHD is recommended to improve financial sustainability, by deploying its own resources or seeking for external support, to continue necessary HIV/AIDS-related trainings to CLMV countries besides the JICA's Third Country Training Program.

Lessons learned for JICA

- 1) In a project whose activities should be continued after the project completion, preparation of the clear exit and reliability strategy with institutional policy is essential (e.g. financial arrangement during the project implementation so that the implementing agency becomes able to spend from their regular budget).
- 2) Measuring effects of training projects often involves contact with ex-trainees, which is quite difficult especially in a regional cooperation project that invites trainees from abroad. To overcome this challenge, a post-project monitoring and evaluation mechanism should be seriously planned from the planning stage. Possible ways may include arranging the allocation of enough time and resources for ex-post evaluation on donor side (i.e., JICA or TICA), or setting a more realistic evaluation framework that does not require tracking of the ex-trainees but instead checks whether the implementing agency still effectively provides training at the time of evaluation.